

# News

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Bureau of Labor Statistics

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## **WEST VIRGINIA WORKPLACE FATALITIES, 2001**

Fatal work injuries totaled 63 in 2001 for West Virginia, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted this year's workplace fatalities were 37 percent more than the 46 fatal injuries recorded in 2000. The two leading causes of workplace fatalities in 2001 were highway crashes (20) and falls to lower level (8); these two events accounted for almost half of the deaths in the State.

The number of highway crashes in West Virginia was at its highest level since 1996 and accounted for 32 percent of fatal work injuries. (See table A.) Nationally, highway crashes remained the leading cause of on-the-job fatalities when the September 11th attacks were excluded, accounting for 24 percent of fatal work injuries. Work-related deaths due to falls to lower levels was at its highest level since the census began in 1992 and accounted for 13 percent of the State's fatal work injuries in 2001; falls to lower levels made up 12 percent of the U.S. total.

Table A. Fatal occupational injuries in West Virginia by selected event groups, 1992-2001

Year	Total fatalities	Highway crashes		Falls to lower level	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1992	77	16	21	6	8
1993	66	14	21	6	9
1994	61	12	20	6	10
1995	56	17	30	--	--
1996	66	21	32	5	8
1997	53	10	19	3	6
1998	57	13	23	6	11
1999	57	13	23	4	7
2000	46	12	26	--	--
2001	63	20	32	8	13

NOTE: Categories that do not meet publication criteria are not shown.

Other leading causes of workplace fatalities in 2001 were caught in or crushed in collapsing materials (7), and struck by an object (6). Work-related deaths from being caught in or crushed in collapsing materials were almost all due to mine cave-ins, while falling objects were mainly responsible for the workplace fatalities when struck by an object. All together, caught in or crushed in collapsing materials and struck by an object were responsible for over one-fifth of the fatal work injuries in West Virginia. (See table 1.)

Nationwide, a total of 8,786 fatal work injuries were reported in 2001, including the 2,886 homicides related to the September 11th terrorist attacks. Excluding these fatalities, the overall workplace fatality count was 5,900 for 2001, down slightly from 2000. In fact, when the fatalities resulting from September 11th were excluded, the 639 workplace homicides was at the lowest level since the census began in 1992; the high was 1,080 in 1994. The number of job-related deaths from highway crashes increased 3 percent from 2000 and continued to be the leading cause of on-the-job fatalities. (See table B.)

Additional Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries data is available on the BLS Internet site at <http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshcfoi1.htm>. Data can be accessed in two ways, through Selective Access, which allows quick access to particular items, or via the special request FTP service, which allows access to an extensive collection of flat text files. The Mid-Atlantic Information Office can provide assistance accessing these files by calling (215) 597-3282.

Table B. Fatal occupational injuries in the United States by selected event groups, 1992-2001

Year	Total fatalities	Highway crashes		Falls to lower level		Homicides	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1992	6,217	1,158	19	507	8	1,044	17
1993	6,331	1,242	20	534	8	1,074	17
1994	6,632	1,343	20	580	9	1,080	16
1995	6,275	1,346	21	578	9	1,036	17
1996	6,202	1,346	22	610	10	927	15
1997	6,238	1,393	22	653	10	860	14
1998	6,055	1,442	24	625	10	714	12
1999	6,054	1,496	25	634	10	651	11
2000 <sup>1</sup>	5,920	1,365	23	659	11	677	11
2001 <sup>2</sup>	5,900	1,404	24	698	12	639	11

<sup>1</sup> The BLS national news release issued August 14, 2001, reported a total of 5,915 fatal work injuries for calendar year 2000. Since then, an additional 5 job-related fatalities were identified, bringing the total job-related fatality count for 2000 to 5,920.

<sup>2</sup> Total excludes fatalities due to the events of September 11, 2001 which claimed the lives of 2,886 persons in work status.

### **Key characteristics of workplace fatalities in West Virginia:**

- Men accounted for 90 percent of the work-related fatalities in the State. Transportation incidents, which include highway, non-highway, pedestrian, air, water, and rail, accounted for 53 percent of these deaths. (See table 2).
- In West Virginia, 95 percent of those who died from a workplace injury were white, non-Hispanic; the leading cause of death for this group of workers was transportation incidents. (See table 2.)
- Workers 25-54 years old -- the prime working age group -- made up about three-fourths of the State's work-related fatalities in 2001. (See table 2.)
- Ninety-two percent of workers killed on-the-job in West Virginia worked for wages and salaries; the rest were self-employed. The leading cause of death for both wage and salary and self-employed workers was transportation incidents. (See table 2.)
- Two industry divisions accounted for over two-fifths of the workplace fatalities in the State -- transportation and public utilities (15) and mining (13). (See table 3.) Work-related deaths in transportation and public utilities were mainly due to transportation incidents, while the leading cause of workplace fatalities in mining was contact with objects and equipment.
- Mining machine operators (10), truck drivers (10), and timber cutting and logging occupations (6) accounted for more than two-fifths of all work-related fatalities in the State. The primary cause of death for mining machine operators and timber cutting and logging workers was contact with objects and equipment, while most truck drivers died from transportation incidents. (See table 4.)

## **TECHNICAL NOTES**

### **Definitions**

For a fatality to be included in the census, the decedent must have been employed (that is working for pay, compensation, or profit) at the time of the event, engaged in a legal work activity, or present at the site of the incident as a requirement of his or her job. These criteria are generally broader than those used by federal and state agencies administering specific laws and regulations. (Fatalities that occur during a person's commute to or from work are excluded from the census counts.)

Data presented in this release include deaths occurring in 2001 that resulted from traumatic occupational injuries. An injury is defined as any intentional or unintentional wound or damage to the body resulting from acute exposure to energy, such as heat, electricity, or kinetic energy from a crash, or from the absence of such essentials as heat or oxygen caused by a specific event, incident, or series of events within a single workday or shift. Included are open wounds, intracranial and internal injuries, heatstroke, hypothermia, asphyxiation, acute poisonings resulting from short-term exposures limited to the worker's shift, suicides and homicides, and work injuries listed as underlying or contributory causes of death.

Information on work-related fatal illnesses is not reported in the BLS census and is excluded from the attached tables because the latency period of many occupational illnesses and the difficulty of linking illnesses to work make identification of a universe problematic.

### **Measurement techniques and limitations**

Data for the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries are compiled from various federal, state, and local administrative sources--including death certificates, workers' compensation reports and claims, reports to various regulatory agencies, medical examiner reports, and police reports--as well as news and other non-governmental reports. Diverse sources are used because studies have shown that no single source captures all job-related fatalities. Source documents are matched so that each fatality is counted only once. To ensure that a fatality occurred while the decedent was at work, information is verified from two or more independent source documents or from a source document and a follow-up questionnaire. Approximately 30 data elements are collected, coded, and tabulated, including information about the worker, the fatal incident, and the machinery or equipment involved.

### **Federal/state**

The Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries includes data for all fatal work injuries, whether they are covered by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) or other federal or state agencies or are outside the scope of regulatory coverage. Thus, any comparison between the BLS fatality census counts and those released by other agencies should take into account the different coverage requirements and definitions being used.

Several federal and state agencies have jurisdiction over workplace safety and health. OSHA and affiliated agencies in states with approved safety programs cover the largest portion of the nation's workers. However, injuries and illnesses occurring in certain industries or activities, such as coal, metal, and nonmetal mining and highway, water, rail, and air transportation, are excluded from OSHA coverage because they are covered by other federal agencies, such as the Mine Safety and Health Administration and various agencies within the Department of Transportation.

## Acknowledgments

BLS thanks the West Virginia Department of Labor for their efforts in collecting accurate, comprehensive, and useful data on fatal work injuries. BLS also appreciates the efforts of all federal, state, local, and private sector agencies that submitted source documents used to identify fatal work injuries. Among these agencies are the Occupational Safety and Health Administration; the National Transportation Safety Board; the U.S. Coast Guard; the Mine Safety and Health Administration; the Employment Standards Administration (Federal Employees' Compensation and Longshore and Harbor Workers' divisions); the Department of Energy; state vital statistics registrars, coroners, and medical examiners; state departments of health, labor and industries, and workers' compensation agencies; state and local police departments; and state farm bureaus.

**TABLE 1. Fatal occupational injuries by event or exposure and major private industry division, West Virginia, 2001**

Event or exposure <sup>1</sup>	Total fatalities (number)	Private Industry <sup>2</sup> (percent)								
		Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	Mining	Construction	Manufacturing	Transportation and public utilities	Wholesale trade	Retail trade	Finance, insurance, and real estate	Services
Total	63	--	20.6	15.9	14.3	23.8	--	4.8	--	9.5
<b>Transportation incidents</b>	33	--	12.1	21.2	--	33.3	--	--	--	9.1
Highway incident	20	--	--	20.0	--	40.0	--	--	--	--
Highway incident, unspecified	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Collision between vehicles, mobile equipment	8	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Collision between vehicles, mobile equipment, unspecified	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Moving in opposite directions, oncoming	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Noncollision incident	8	--	--	--	--	37.5	--	--	--	--
Jack-knifed or overturned--no collision	5	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Nonhighway incident, except rail, air, water	5	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Noncollision incident	5	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Pedestrian, nonpassenger struck by vehicle, mobile equipment	5	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Assaults and violent acts</b>	4	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Homicides	4	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Shooting	4	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Contact with objects and equipment</b>	13	--	53.8	--	38.5	--	--	--	--	--
Struck by object	6	--	--	--	83.3	--	--	--	--	--
Struck by falling object	5	--	--	--	100.0	--	--	--	--	--
Caught in or crushed in collapsing materials	7	--	85.7	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other cave-in	6	--	100.0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Falls</b>	9	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Fall to lower level	8	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Fall to lower level, n.e.c.	4	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Exposure to harmful substances or environments</b>	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

<sup>1</sup> Based on the 1992 BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Manual.

<sup>2</sup> Classified according to the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1987*

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding.

Dashes indicate no data reported or data that do not meet publication criteria. n.e.c. means "not elsewhere classified."

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, in cooperation with State and Federal agencies, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries

**Table 2. Fatal occupational injuries by worker characteristics and event or exposure, West Virginia, 2001**

Worker characteristics	Total fatalities (number)	Event or exposure <sup>1</sup> (percent)					
		Transportation incidents <sup>2</sup>	Assaults and violent acts <sup>3</sup>	Contact with objects and equipment	Falls	Exposure to harmful substances or environments	Fires and explosions
Total	63	52.4	6.3	20.6	14.3	4.8	--
<b>Employee Status</b>							
Wage and Salary Workers <sup>4</sup>	58	51.7	6.9	20.7	13.8	5.2	--
Self-employed <sup>5</sup>	5	60.0	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Sex</b>							
Men	57	52.6	--	22.8	14.0	5.3	--
Women	6	50.0	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Age</b>							
Under 16 years	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
16 to 17 years	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
18 to 19 years	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
20 to 24 years	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
25 to 34 years	11	27.3	--	45.5	--	--	--
35 to 44 years	14	42.9	--	--	21.4	21.4	--
45 to 54 years	23	60.9	--	26.1	--	--	--
55 to 64 years	8	50.0	--	--	--	--	--
65 years and over	4	75.0	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Race or Ethnic Origin</b>							
White, non-Hispanic	60	51.7	6.7	20.0	15.0	5.0	--
Black, non-Hispanic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Hispanic or Latino	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
American Indian or Alaska Native	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Asian or Pacific Islander	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Asian	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

<sup>1</sup> Based on the 1992 BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Manual.

<sup>2</sup> Includes highway, nonhighway, air, water, and rail fatalities.

<sup>3</sup> Includes violence by persons, self-inflicted injury, and assaults by animals.

<sup>4</sup> May include volunteers and other workers receiving compensation.

<sup>5</sup> Includes paid and unpaid family workers, and may include owners of incorporated businesses, or members of partnerships.

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding.

Dashes indicate no data reported or data that do not meet publication criteria.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, in cooperation with State and Federal agencies, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries

TABLE 3. Fatal occupational injuries by industry, West Virginia, 2001

Industry <sup>1</sup>	1996 (number)	1997 (number)	1998 (number)	1999 (number)	2000 (number)	2001	
						Number	Percent
Total	66	53	57	57	46	63	100.0
<b>Private Industry</b>	58	50	50	50	40	59	93.7
<b>Agriculture, forestry, and fishing</b>	--	--	4	--	--	--	--
Agricultural production-crops	--	--	3	--	--	--	--
<b>Mining<sup>2</sup></b>	15	6	7	9	12	13	20.6
Coal mining	12	6	6	9	11	12	19.0
Bituminous coal and lignite mining	12	6	6	9	11	12	19.0
Bituminous coal underground mining	8	4	6	8	--	--	--
Oil and gas extraction	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
Oil and gas field services	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Construction</b>	9	12	7	4	6	10	15.9
General building contractors	--	3	--	--	--	--	--
Heavy construction, except building	5	6	--	--	--	--	--
Heavy construction, except highway	5	5	--	--	--	--	--
Heavy construction, n.e.c.	--	5	--	--	--	--	--
Special trade contractors	4	3	5	3	3	10	15.9
<b>Manufacturing</b>	7	6	11	13	5	9	14.3
Lumber and wood products	6	6	8	10	3	8	12.7
Logging	6	6	8	9	--	7	11.1
<b>Transportation and public utilities</b>	18	11	14	12	4	15	23.8
Trucking and warehousing	13	3	12	8	4	5	7.9
Trucking and courier services, except air	12	3	12	8	4	5	7.9
Local trucking without storage	--	--	3	--	--	--	--
Trucking, except local	--	--	--	3	--	--	--
Transportation by air	--	3	--	--	--	--	--
Air transportation, nonscheduled	--	3	--	--	--	--	--
Electric, gas, and sanitary services	--	--	--	--	--	6	9.5
Sanitary services	--	--	--	--	--	3	4.8
<b>Retail trade</b>	4	7	4	5	7	3	4.8
Automotive dealers and service stations	--	3	--	3	--	--	--
New and used car dealers	--	3	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Services</b>	5	5	--	3	4	6	9.5
<b>Government<sup>3</sup></b>	8	3	7	7	6	4	6.3
<b>Federal Government (including resident armed forces)</b>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>State Government</b>	3	--	--	4	--	--	--
<b>Public Administration</b>	--	--	--	3	--	--	--
<b>Local Government</b>	4	--	4	3	3	--	--
<b>Public Administration</b>	--	--	3	--	--	--	--

<sup>1</sup> Classified according to the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1987*

<sup>2</sup> Includes fatalities at all establishments categorized as Mining (Division B) in the Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1987 Edition, including establishments not governed by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) rules and reporting, such as those in Oil and Gas Extraction.

<sup>3</sup> Includes fatalities to workers employed by governmental organizations regardless of industry.

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding.

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n.e.c. means "not elsewhere classified."

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, in cooperation with State and Federal agencies, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries

**TABLE 4. Fatal occupational injuries by occupation and event or exposure, West Virginia, 2001**

Occupation <sup>1</sup>	Total fatalities (number)	Event or exposure <sup>2</sup> (percent)					
		Transportation incidents <sup>3</sup>	Assaults and violent acts <sup>4</sup>	Contact with objects and equipment	Falls	Exposure to harmful substances or environments	Fires and explosions
Total	63	52.4	6.3	20.6	14.3	4.8	--
<b>Technical, sales, and administrative support</b>	7	85.7	--	--	--	--	--
Technicians and related support occupations	4	100.0	--	--	--	--	--
Sales occupations	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Service occupations</b>	4	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Farming, forestry, and fishing</b>	7	--	--	71.4	--	--	--
Forestry and logging occupations	6	--	--	83.3	--	--	--
Timber cutting and logging occupations	6	--	--	83.3	--	--	--
<b>Precision production, craft, and repair</b>	17	29.4	--	35.3	23.5	--	--
Mechanics and repairers	3	--	--	--	100.0	--	--
Mechanics and repairers, except supervisors	3	--	--	--	100.0	--	--
Construction trades	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
Extractive occupations	10	30.0	--	60.0	--	--	--
Mining machine operators	10	30.0	--	60.0	--	--	--
<b>Operators, fabricators, and laborers</b>	26	73.1	--	--	11.5	--	--
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
Transportation and material moving occupations	17	76.5	--	--	--	--	--
Motor vehicle operators	13	84.6	--	--	--	--	--
Truck drivers	10	90.0	--	--	--	--	--
Material moving equipment operators	4	--	--	--	--	--	--
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	6	83.3	--	--	--	--	--
Construction laborers	3	100.0	--	--	--	--	--

<sup>1</sup> Based on the 1990 Occupational Classification System developed by the Bureau of the Census.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the 1992 BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Manual.

<sup>3</sup> Includes highway, nonhighway, air, water, and rail fatalities.

<sup>4</sup> Includes violence by persons, self-inflicted injury, and assaults by animals.

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding.

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